

A review of White Privilege 101

By Donna Madison

I thoroughly enjoyed Art Munin's two hour presentation of White Privilege 101. Dr. Munin's wit and energy made the time speed by. Dr. Munin's skillful use of organization, knowledge and simple slides rapidly led the audience through history and new ideas. The talk seemed to be tailored to people who have been concerned with racism and who are willing to listen to new interpretations. Dr. Munin was sincere and exhibited consistent discipline in avoiding talking down to an audience who generally had less topical familiarity and who more or less did not readily accept the total implications of white privilege. Dr. Munin's charged personality and dialogue with a lively audience also made the evening rewarding for more advanced students of the topic.

A few carefully felt words about Dr. Munin's Irish-Italian ethnicity created instantly recognizable portraits of family pride and an affectionate implied sense of the limitations of his background's white cultural world view. As he continued to speak generally about American white history, he tied generations of culture with the surprise revelation that his ancestors owned a deep south plantation and many slaves. Elite status of obvious privilege was invisibly connected to the world of Dr. Munin's hard scrapple all white working class background.

The event was held, on February 2, at the impressive Ocean County Library in Toms River, NJ. It was one event in an ongoing series of talks on various topics. Thus, the audience comprised both interested regular attendees and people attracted specifically by the question of white privilege. The group expressed a wide range of points of view. One person's persistent voicing of opposition to the idea of white privilege was handled with patience and poise by Dr. Munin. Dr. Munin respected and encouraged many who spoke. Was this dialogue about acceptance of the concept of white privilege successful? Stimulation of thought prevailed.